

Message Text

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ACTION LAB-06

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E.O. 11652: ADS DECLAS 8/20/74

TAGS: ELAB, MT

SUBJ: LABOR NOTES

FOR LABOR

1. THE LABOR SCENE IN MALTA UNDER THE JOINT LEADERSHIP OF THE RULING MALTA LABOR PARTY AND THE GENERAL WORKERS' UNION REMAINS COMPARATIVELY CALM. THE ONLY IMPORTANT CURRENT INDUSTRIAL ACTION FACING THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS A LOCKOUT OF ABOUT 700 WORKERS IN SEVEN COMMERCIAL GARAGES. THE AUTOMOBILE TRADERS' ASSOCIATION VOTED FOR THE LOCK-OUT IN SUPPORT OF GASAN ENTERPRISES LIMITED (LOCAL FORD DEALER) WHICH WAS BEING FACED BY A SIT-IN ORGANIZED BY THE METAL WORKERS SECTION OF THE GENERAL WORKERS' UNION. MINISTER OF LABOR J. CASSAR HAS THUS FAR BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN GETTING THE TWO PARTIES TO AGREE TO ARBITRATION.

2. SOMEWHAT IRONICALLY, THE GOM ITSELF AT TIMES FEELS MORE PRESSURE FROM STRIKE ACTION THAN THE PRIVATE SECTOR. THE MINISTRY OF DEVELOPMENT, FOR EXAMPLE, WHICH ADMINISTERS THE PORT, WAS FACED LAST WEEK WITH TWO SEPARATE WILDCAT STRIKE ACTIONS BY STEVEDORES SEEKING

IMPROVED WAGE RATES AND ADDITIONAL MEN IN GANGS. THE
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STEVEDORES WANT THE SAME RATES NOW PAID TO PORT WORKERS WHO

REMOVE GOODS FROM DOCK AREAS. SIMILARLY, HARBOR PILOTS WALKED OUT LAST WEEK IN A TWO AND HALF HOUR UNOFFICIAL STRIKE OVER AN OUTSTANDING CLAIM FOR IMPROVED WAGE RATES. MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT HYZLER IS BELIEVED TO BE UNSYMPATHETIC TO THE CURRENT DEMANDS OF THE STEVEDORES AND HARBOR PILOTS LEST THEIR SATISFACTION REOPEN THE WAGE RATE QUESTION WITH THE PORT HANDLERS.

3. ANOTHER GOVERNMENT MINISTRY WHICH HAS BEEN FACED WITH RECENT INDUSTRIAL ACTION IS THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC BUILDING AND WORKS. ARCHITECTS AND CIVIL ENGINEERS IN THE MINISTRY STAGED A PROTEST STRIKE LAST WEEK AGAINST ALLEGED SHABBY TREATMENT AND SHORTCOMINGS WITHIN THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, INCLUDING SHORTAGES OF SUPPORTING STAFF AND EQUIPMENT. IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO OFFICIALS OF THE MALTA GOVERNMENT PROFESSIONAL OFFICERS ASSOCIATION, WHICH ORGANIZED THE ARCHITECTS STRIKE, THE MINISTRY DENIED THE SHORTAGES OF SUPPORTING STAFF AND EQUIPMENT, NOTING THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS UTILIZES, IN ADDITION TO CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEES, THE EXPERTISE OF ROYAL ENGINEERS PROVIDED BY THE BRITISH ARMY, ITALIAN EXPERTS AND THE MALTA DRYDOCKS CORPORATION. THE STATEMENT ADDED THAT THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT HAS NEVER HAD AS MUCH EQUIPMENT AS IS NOW AVAILABLE, INCLUDING RECENTLY ARRIVED U.S. SURPLUS EQUIPMENT.

4. THE COMPLAINTS OF ARCHITECTS AND CIVIL ENGINEERS WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC BUILDING AND WORKS ARE ECHOED MORE BROADLY THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE CIVIL SERVICE. ONE OF THE LARGEST UNIONS OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, FOR EXAMPLE, THE MALTA GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES UNION, IS CLAIMING THAT THE ENTIRE CIVIL SERVICE IS NOT WORKING SMOOTHLY AND EFFICIENTLY UNDER THE MALTA LABOR PARTY ADMINISTRATION. THEY STATE THAT MANY OFFICES ARE UNDERSTAFFED AND WORK MATERIALS ARE EITHER OF INFERIOR QUALITY OR DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN. THEY ARE ALSO BECOMING INCREASINGLY IMPATIENT WITH THE POSTPONEMENT OF LONG OVERDUE PERSONNEL CHANGES ON GROUNDS OF A PENDING REORGANIZATION UNDER A CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION APPOINTED TWO YEARS AGO. GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ARGUE THAT AFTER THE PASSAGE OF TWO YEARS THERE IS STILL NO EVIDENCE OF A START ON CIVIL SERVICE REORGANIZATION.

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